

# SEMI-WEEKLY INTERIOR JOURNAL

STANFORD, KY., DECEMBER 22, 1893

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CINCINNATI, O.

# LUXURIES THAT KILL

THE AUTHOR OF "RUTLEDGE" SAYS THE AIRTIGHT STOVE IS ONE.

Miriam Coles Harrison "Modern Improvements"—Foes to the Health of Country People—An Insidious and Wily Enemy. A Breezy Discussion.

(Copyright, 1893, by American Press Association.)



HE airtight stove is an insidious, a wily enemy. It gives you warmth without trouble, but also without ventilation and without cheer. Think of the good old days of our hardy grandfathers, when the flames roared up the chimney and carried all impurities of the air with them. You cannot have better ventilation than by an open fire. No matter if your back freezes and your cheeks burn, your lungs are not poisoned by used up air and your skin is not parched by the dry, unwholesome heat.

You know, undoubtedly, that consumption, the scourge of modern New England, has more than doubled since the introduction of the airtight stove. You know that Americans are a race of dyspeptics, the unhealthiest race on the face of the globe—at least on the healthy part of its face. Yellow, lean, nervous, anxious looking people, all of us, in the city and in the country. Look at the hardy Scotch and English farmers and their buxom wives and daughters. They do not look as if they had been bred on the same planet with us. Our women break down earlier than those of other nations, the men grow old at twice the rate. There must be some reason for it. It does not seem probable that it is the climate nor inherited weakness, but that it is the result of the conditions under which we live and bring up our children. The plain fact is, we are dying of our luxuries, our "modern improvements."

Our easy money getting is our curse. Better be a little less comfortable and a little more healthy, a little harder worked and a little longer lived. But let us begin with the air we breathe. I think that if an instrument could be invented which would register the impurities in the atmosphere, we should all open our windows when it marked "vile." The worst of our heaven bestowed instrument of detection, our organ of smell, is that it gets quite out of order if long in an impure atmosphere and does not record correctly. Now fancy for a moment what the air must be in any ordinary living room in any ordinary farmer's or mechanic's dwelling in the middle of winter. The stove has been burning night and day for months. The windows are corked up, the doors are "listered" even, possibly. There is cooking, and there is eating, and there is smoking going on, and there are at night one or more kerosene lamps burning actively for hours. And underneath all there is that arsenal of woe, the cellar, filled perhaps with spoiled potatoes and other decaying vegetable matter.

Now, where is this air to go to and how is fresh air to come in to take its place? How can human beings stand breathing that sort of atmosphere? The men have the best of it, for they have, most of them, to go out into the open air, whether they want to or not, but their wives and daughters usually have to stay in and do the work of the house, without having air enough to fill their lungs, and it is no wonder that their blood is impoverished and that their organs, one and all, lose strength. It is an unnatural and monstrous life, and it is not to be wondered at that feeble children are born of the mothers who have to lead it. I especially pity my country sisters, in their hot, low rooms, doing work at such a disadvantage. It is like making bricks without straw.

I pity my sisters, too, who equally defy the laws of health in dress, diet and air. But now I am talking to the country ones, and this is what I say: Heaven never meant you to lead such lives or breathe such air. You are killing yourselves by inches, and it is quite in your own hands to prevent it. You have bricked up your chimneys and bought your stoves, and that probably can't be helped, but you can at least take the stuffing out of the windows and get ventilators for them and make it a duty to air the room several times a day. And buy some thermometers—thermometers are very cheap—and put one in every room, and when it gets to 68 degrees open the doors and windows and keep the temperature down to that.

Do not sit in a draft—that is fatal—but open your windows and go out of the room and come back to it when it is fresh. The more devitalized the air is, the less it warms you. Sixty-eight degrees of good air warms you more than 78 degrees of vitiated air does. People on the other side of the ocean think they cannot breathe when the thermometer gets above 60 degrees. I wonder what they would think of our rooms and of our railway cars. Americans think they can stand any heat. They certainly have become insensible to it. It is difficult to make any place "too hot" for them.

And here in this unrivaled air, this wonderfully fine new world climate, you men and women ought to be models of health and strength, and you are not. Think of it, you who live beside the sea, there is nothing between you and Spain. You can draw a breath 3,000 miles long every time you open your windows, and you don't open them, but hug your stoves and shut out the air and wonder that you don't feel well.

And you who live among the moon

tains, where city people spend thousands of dollars to take their families every summer, what air do you breathe seven months in the year? Air that you have made bad enough to kill a dog, with your stoves, and your lamps, and your stuffed up windows. Now, really, it seems a pity that we can't get something out of our splendid clear sunshine, and our strong winds, and our rich soil here in America.

If you lived in a foggy little island like England, where the sun scarcely ever shines, and where the raw chill eats into one's very bones, you might complain. Or if you had to endure the cold, cheerless winters of Germany, or indeed of all northern Europe, you might say that nature had not done much for you, and it was no wonder that you were not healthy. But in fact you have glorious suns, and fine clear air, and a soil that breeds less evil than elsewhere, and with all that, you are the unhealthiest people in the world. You do everything to counteract the good that heaven has sent you, and probably you charge heaven with your miseries. To you

The blessed sun and air are banned and barred, forbidden rare, but forbidden, not by heaven, but by your own ignorance and folly. The air is like the grace of God—it is there for you, healing, salvation, health, without money and without price—and you refuse it.

Miriam Coles Harrison

WOMAN'S WORLD IN PARAGRAPHS.

When We Are Civilized Enough to Dress as We Please.

A pretty, gentle little woman, Mrs. Aber of San Diego, Cal., has devised and appeared upon the public street in a costume which she considers the most beautiful and convenient of anything worn in modern times. This unique suit consists of just two garments—an under tunic of fine, white muslin and an outer tunic of unbleached muslin. The lady shares the barefoot fad, which is extending among people in our time, and believes it is much more healthful and comfortable to go barefoot than to wear shoes. She walks about the streets and at home without shoes or stockings. Thereupon a broad smile extends from one side of this continent to the other, and the newspaper wits make merry over the mild little woman in San Diego. But why should they? Her costume is certainly more healthful, convenient, and in warm weather more comfortable, than that of any other woman in civilization today. We have worn heavy clothes clinging close to the body for so many years that the human skin is really dead. That is the meaning of what is called scurf skin. Millions of little mouths are stopped and stuffed up by the lint from the clothing that fills them. Air is excluded from the skin, and all it can do is to pour layer upon layer of waste material into the internal organs as long as it can, then take refuge in a cold or a case of severe illness, to waken the degenerate son of civilization to his danger. Animals are more healthy than we because the air can come freely to their skin and take away the waste matter. Extra work is not thus thrown upon the internal excretory organs, as is the case with man. The little lady of San Diego is on the right track absolutely. Victor Hugo retained his tremendous vitality and energy to great age partly because in the island of Jersey every morning it was his custom to take a prolonged air and sea fog bath on the top of his house. When we are as civilized as inhabitants of Arabia and India are in this matter, we shall be able to permit people to dress exactly as they please without being insulted or derided, so long as they are decently covered and clean, and we shall never be civilized till we learn that it is none of our business how other people dress.

The scientist who discovered in the human larynx the anatomical reason why woman has a soprano voice and man a bass one was a woman, Mrs. Emma Seiler. She was German, born in Wurtzburg. Left a widow with two children to support, she resolved to become a teacher of singing, but suddenly lost her voice. Then she determined to find out why, also to discover if possible the correct method of singing, so that others might not lose their voices. For this purpose she studied anatomy. Surrounded, however, as she was by the idiots and bigots who would cut off all intellectual pursuits from women, she was obliged to study in secret. She dissected larynx after larynx and spent years in her search, trying to find for one thing why women's head tones could reach high C while men had no soprano tones. At length her search was rewarded. She discovered under the microscope one day two small wedge shaped cartilages whose action produces the highest tones of the human voice. She made her discovery public. It excited great attention among scientists. But so cruel was the prejudice of her time that she did not dare let the world know a woman made the discovery and wrote the account of it. Her own brother, a physician, praised the treatise in the highest terms till he found his own sister had written it. Then he dashed it down, saying in a rage that she would better be attending to her housework. Mme. Seiler's portrait, a marble relief, is in possession of the American Philosophical society of Philadelphia, of which she was a member. She wrote among other books "The Voice in Singing," "The Voice in Speaking." She died in 1886.

I am so dead tired of this eternal harping on the relation of the sexes. Life should be one song of thanksgiving for the power to work and achieve.

Miss Lillian O'Connell of New York has hit upon a comparatively new idea in dramatic recitations. She has a course of six entertainments, which she calls lecture recitals, dealing with famous poets and novelists. The young lady first gives a word sketch of the author, then recites something from his or her pen. Miss O'Connell's delineations are so scholarly and pleasing that her unique entertainments are meeting with much success.

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The best salve in the world for cuts, bruises, sores, ulcers, salt rheum, fever sores, tetter, chapped hands, chilblains, corns and all skin eruptions, and positively cures piles, or no pay required. It is guaranteed to give perfect satisfaction or money refunded. Price 25 cents per box. For sale by A. R. Penny, Stanford, Ky.

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